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# Security Council

Seventy-first year

*Provisional*

**7674**th meeting
Tuesday, 19 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Liu Jieyi | (China) |
| *Members*: | Angola | Mr. Gaspar Martins |
| | Egypt | Mr. Mahmoud |
| | France | Mr. Lamek |
| | Japan | Mr. Yoshikawa |
| | Malaysia | Mr. Ibrahim |
| | New Zealand | Mr. Taula |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Senegal | Mr. Ciss |
| | Spain | Mr. González de Linares Palou |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Yelchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Rycroft |
| | United States of America | Mr. Pressman |
| | Uruguay | Mr. Bermúdez |
| | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | Mr. Ramírez Carreño |

## Agenda

The situation in Somalia

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Somalia**

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

I request that the Protocol Officer escort His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, to a seat at the Council table.

*Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.*

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf to the Council, I welcome His Excellency President Mahmud.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; and Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Keating.

**Mr. Keating**: It is an honour to be here with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Allow me to begin by acknowledging the unfailing cooperation and friendship that he has extended to me and to recognize his leadership role at this pivotal moment in Somalia's history.

The last time I addressed the Security Council (see S/PV.7614) I had only been on the job for a few days. I said then that success in 2016 would depend upon seizing opportunities that political progress could bring about. Over the past several weeks, the President and leaders of Somalia have done just that, and progress, though not irreversible, is being made.

Last week Somalia leaders from all Federal member states and iterim regional administrations reached agreement on the electoral model to be used later this year. That significant achievement paves the way for practical planning. I commend the statesmanship shown by the National Leadership Forum, and I welcome the Federal Government's engagement of Puntland to address its concerns in the agreement signed in Garowe on 3 April, which cleared the way forward. The electoral process envisaged for 2016 will be significantly different to that of 2012. The electoral college will be 100 times larger. There will be a genuine choice of candidates. Voting will take place not just in Mogadishu, but in each of the capitals, or seats of Government, of the existing and emerging Federal member states. A two-tier structure made up of Federal and state-level representatives will implement the process. And 30 per cent of the seats in Parliament are being reserved for women.

Much remains to be done in a very short period. For example, the admirable commitment to reserve 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for women necessitates the identification of specific seats, in a balanced manner, to be contested exclusively by women. Achieving that commitment in practice will not be easy in a clan-based model, but it could mark a major milestone in making women's political empowerment and leadership a reality. Once the Cabinet has formalized the National Leadership Forum decision, it will go to the Federal Parliament. We call upon Parliament to expedite its endorsement of the model to allow for timely implementation. And I welcome the continued commitment by Somali leaders, in line with the Council's expectations that there will be no extension of constitutionally mandated term limits.

The 2016 electoral model will be unique, a one-off. It is in every sense a midway point between the elections of 2012, when just 135 electors selected 275 members of Parliament, and 2020, when all Somalis will have a say. Work is now under way to that end. Somali leaders have agreed to adopt a political road map for the period 2016 to 2020, including civil voter registration, boundary demarcation, the strengthening of independent electoral bodies and the preparation of the relevant legislation, including that relating to political parties.

There are many outstanding issues. The state-formation process in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle has encountered difficulties and delays. The international community is eager to support an inclusive agreement reached among clan leaders in both regions. We hope that the formation of the next state

administration will take place soon and will set the stage for agreeing on the status of the Federal capital.

The breakthrough in the electoral process is generating broader momentum. The technical review of Somalia's provisional Federal Constitution has advanced. The first reading of constitutional amendments in Parliament took place in February. Regional consultations are now under way. Politically contentious issues are scheduled to be discussed at the next Leadership Forum meeting, to be held in May. That discussion will immediately precede a 10-day National Constitutional Conference, to be held in Garoowe, Puntland.

That activity amounts to a historic opportunity for all Somalis to contribute to shaping the political and legal foundations of their country. Some major issues may be addressed only after the electoral process, but there already have been significant developments. The rule of law and its centrepiece, the Federal Constitution, will be the strongest guarantees of long-term stability and democracy in Somalia.

The fact that progress has been taking place amid great insecurity is another reason that such progress could be reversible. Too many civilians and too many soldiers are dying. Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat. An Al-Shabaab incursion into the coastal area of Puntland in mid-March highlighted the vulnerability of the north. It also beamed a spotlight on the recruitment practices and abuse of children by Al-Shabaab, which is beyond appalling. The attack was contained thanks to the swift actions of Puntland's forces and the support of the Federal Government.

Although facing significant casualties, Al-Shabaab continues to carry out repeated asymmetric and conventional attacks. They will try to disrupt an electoral process that they correctly view as threatening their agenda. I pay tribute to the bravery of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its troops and to the courage of the Somali security forces and the Somali people in confronting Al-Shabaab. They need and deserve our continued support. The trilateral partnership of the Federal Government, the African Union and the United Nations remains a cornerstone of the peacebuilding and State-building endeavour in Somalia.

I am encouraged by the commitments made by the AMISOM troop-contributing countries when they met in Djibouti in February. There is a recognition that command-and-control arrangements and force headquarters must be strengthened, including by placing critical enablers under the Force Commander's tasking authority. I hope that a new Force Commander will be in place soon. I have just come from Addis Ababa, where the first meeting of the African Union-United Nations Joint Task Force on strengthening AMISOM was held. It will advance our combined efforts to meet the shortfall in AMISOM funding, to strengthen its capacity and to secure the electoral process.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union and I have identified common strategic objectives, in line with resolution 2245 (2015). Compacts between me and the Head of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), as well as between the Head of UNSOS and the Special Representative, are being finalized for the delivery of support to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and to AMISOM, respectively. We are committed to implementing the human rights due diligence policy, to promoting respect for broader human rights and to following up on allegations and ensuring accountability. The capacity of UNSOS itself is being strengthened, including through the deployment of a team of United Kingdom military experts beginning this month.

The Federal President is committed to strengthening Somali security capabilities. I applaud him for that. It is a complex and sensitive issue, but absolutely fundamental to State-building and to consolidating progress. I am therefore pleased that the Federal Government has developed a national threat assessment and national security policy. Those have been shared with the regional authorities within the country. Hopefully, recommendations will be agreed upon at the next National Leadership Forum, to be held in May. Detailed work will still have to be done on financially sustainable plans for the military, police and justice and corrections systems.

Political subscription to a national security architecture must be complemented by police, justice and corrections models that are appropriate for Somalia's unique circumstances and its Federal future. I am delighted to report that a new policing model emerged last month from consultations among the Federal Government and regional states and administrations. It includes roles and responsibilities at both the Federal and state levels and accountability to civilian authorities.

I share the President's concerns about the inconsistent payment of salaries to security-sector personnel. Last month, international security partners met with the President and the Minister of Finance to discuss the coordination of salaries and stipends. Timely and regular pay by electronic means and the transfer to a unified biometric registration system is the way forward. There is also scope for greater coherence on the part of international partners to support the Somali security sector on the basis of the security architecture and plans currently under discussion.

Somalia's economy is dependant upon favourable weather and the entrepreneurship of its people, including in the diaspora. Building greater trust and identifying the mutual benefits to be derived from stronger relationships between the State and businesses could yield enormous benefits, including the strengthening of institutions that can deliver greater security, financial accountability, a favourable macroeconomic and regulatory environment and basic services, such as energy, education and vocational training. Those are in the interests both of businesses and of young Somalis, most of whom lack job prospects.

Somalia continues to make progress in economic management. An anti-money-laundering bill was signed into law in February. Empty seats on the Central Bank Board have been filled. While there is still a long way to go, including tackling corruption and reducing financial leakage, the current direction is encouraging. Recognizing that situation, last week the International Monetary Fund announced its intention to propose a staff-monitored programme, intended to help Somalia to establish the track record required to begin the process of debt relief, and eventually eligibility for concessional lending from international financial institutions.

The Federal Government is central to moving that agenda forward. Success would yield benefits for all parts of the country, helping to attract both public and private investment in areas that will boost Somalia's competitiveness and ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. We are grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General for calling upon Somalia's external creditors to accelerate preparations for in-depth discussions on eligibility, as outlined at the Spring Meetings Somalia Roundtable of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, held in Washington, D.C., last week.

Somalia's security and prosperity depend upon success in reversing dependency upon aid and in addressing the root causes of fragility, conflict and violent extremism. A comprehensive political strategy is required that embraces economic investment in the drivers of growth, job creation and education, including for girls and women; and in the rule of law, respect for human rights, and capable security and counter-terrorism forces. It is a formidable agenda and requires commitment both by Somalia's political and traditional leaders, as well as concerted support from its neighbours and international partners. It also requires addressing short-term realities. One of those is drought, now affecting Somaliland and Puntland. Droughts in 2011 triggered a famine that resulted in the deaths of some 260,000 people. That must not happen again.

On top of acute food insecurity, continuing drought could have a negative impact on broader security — strengthening Islamist jihadists currently on the back foot in those areas — and increase displacement and migrant flows. Timely and appropriate action now will mitigate the possibility of another catastrophe. The resources needed to tackle the problem are immeasurably less than the costs later — whether measured in money or, more important, lives. Somali authorities have established national and regional drought committees to raise funds and coordinate the response, but that is not enough. Humanitarian organizations have received only $145 million of the $885 million callled for in the consolidated appeal for 2016. On 31 March, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, launched a call for aid seeking $105 million to step up drought response. Donors are responding, for which we are grateful, but so much more is needed.

The challenges faced by Somalis are formidable. The progress is real, but reversible. The state-formation and electoral processes remain vulnerable to spoilers. AMISOM needs more support and cannot stay forever. We must therefore do our best to make sure that the progress is not reversed, to get the electoral process for 2016 completed and the elections in 2020 prepared; to build the national capacity of the Somalis to take over from AMISOM; and to generate the jobs and revenues for a sustainable State.

Our — and my — efforts to do that depend in large part upon the unity of the Council, for which I must thank members. It also depends upon the coherence of the broader international community, not only the African Union but also the Intergovernmental Authority

on Development, the European Union and Somalia's principal bilateral partners.

I look forward to the visit of the Security Council next month and to joining the leaders of Somalia to ensure a brighter future for all Somalis.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Keating for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António.

**Mr. António**: Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, and congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for giving us this opportunity to address the Council on the situation in Somalia. This is an opportunity to exchange views on the recent political and security situation. As the African Union (AU), we would also like to focus on an update on the operations of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

I would like to thank Mr. Keating for his very insightful briefing, as well as for his cooperation on the ground. I would also especially like to welcome His Excellency the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia to the Council.

Since the last briefing by the African Union (see S/PV.7614), Somalia seems firmly set on the path to polls later this year. I am happy to note that the dynamic and proactive relationship that has developed among Somalia's Federal and regional leaders in the context of the National Leadership Forum is allowing for the enhancement of synergies, mutual accommodation, collaboration and the consolidation of a common vision for Somalia.

Earlier this month, with limited intervention by international partners, Somali leaders met and signed off on the practical details of the 2016 electoral model, as stated by Mr. Keating. They unanimously adopted a joint declaration spelling out the general principles and guidelines for the implementation of the electoral model they agreed upon during the January meeting of the National Leadership Forum. In that respect, the AU looks forward to the conduct of elections in Somalia by August 2016, based on that consensual model.

That is a step in the desired direction, and collaboration, mutual tolerance and readiness will continue to define the success of the electoral process and other political aspects in Somalia in accordance with Vision 2016. As much as it is still below the desired threshold of the one person/one vote model, we commend the introduction of electoral colleges for the 2016 elections, which will be significantly larger than the small number of elders who chose the leaders of the current central Government and members of the Federal Parliament four years ago. With the present electoral model, the 2016 process is anticipated to be more inclusive and representative. We remain ready to support the Government and the people of Somalia in that endeavour.

While we welcome those developments, we also urge the timely nomination of the other electoral organs and the completion by the technical committee of the election implementation plan, including its subsequent ratification by the Federal Parliament. Somalia now has three emergent states members of the federation, each with an elected leader presiding over a cabinet of ministers and an elected assembly. We urge the Federal Government to continue to push for the timely conclusion of the process for the establishment of the final state of the federation, which will bring together the two regions of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. The empowerment and consolidation of those regional administrations will bring the Government closer to the people and make the provision of essential services — including security, law and order, justice, the sinking of boreholes and the building of schools, hospitals and roads — much more possible.

In the fulfilment of their mandate, AMISOM forces have registered significant gains in Somalia. The ousting of Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu and the liberation of a large number of district capitals and swathes of territory previously under Al-Shabaab control have significantly contributed to the creation of levels of stability that allowed for a viable political process to unfold and governance to take place in the country. The ongoing Operation Juba Corridor, coupled with the recent recovery of more territory and towns and the air strikes by AMISOM partners, have contributed to degrading Al-Shabaab capabilities and eliminating several of its top leaders.

Despite those gains, the security situation in Somalia remains fluid. Al-Shaabab has shown resilience and the capacity to adapt. It still retains considerable initiative and capacity to gather intelligence and deploy small, but highly mobile and effective, teams of fighters who use suicide bombers, grenades and artillery to attack, impede the movement of people and goods, slow down AMISOM activities in the main supply routes, carry

out ambushes and mount complex attacks through a combined and concomitant use of all those types of weapons.

In the light of those challenges, the AU has taken several steps to ensure that AMISOM operational efficiency is enhanced. The AU convened a summit of troop and police-contributing countries on 28 February, hosted by the Government of Djibouti, to address some of the immediate challenges confronting AMISOM operations, especially in relation to resources, command and control and the generation of additional enablers and support to the Somali national security forces. The Heads of State and the troop and police-contributing countries took important decisions and made far-reaching commitments on those aspects and signed the Djibouti Declaration on AMISOM, which set the foundations for the consolidation of AMISOM's mission of stabilizing Somalia.

The African Union and the United Nations have also formally established the joint working group meeting, which was formally launched in Addis Ababa on 15 April. The working group is an outcome of the meeting of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security convened in New York on 22 March. It is expected to strengthen AMISOM's operational effectiveness. The working group is currently meeting in Addis Ababa to discuss concrete ways to enhance AMISOM's command and control, including the possibility of a multinational sector headquarters in AMISOM's area of operations, as well as to enhance the capacity of the AMISOM force and Mission headquarters. The working group will formally submitt its technical recommendations in due course.

AMISOM's priorities in the third and fourth quarters of the year are to continue to conduct defensive, offensive and routine operations in the areas of its responsibility in Somalia; patrol main supply routes; escort convoys; and to protect airports, ports, other critical infrastructure, sensitive sites and very important persons. The conduct of surprise attacks and cordon-and-search operations to disrupt enemy plans and degrade, weaken and destroy its capabilities, and reduce and eliminate its presence in towns, villages and remote areas are an essential part of AMISOM's modus operandi. That will reduce Al-Shabaab's ability to carry out ambushes and grenade attacks against AMISOM and the Somali national security forces or to place improvised explosive devices along the main supply routes. Moreover, that will ensure that Al-Shabaab does not succeed in its attempts to disrupt the upcoming elections in Somalia later this year, and will make it possible for the elections to take place in an enabling, safe and secure environment. To that effect, the Federal Government of Somalia and AMISOM have set up a joint committee that has already started to operate. That will require the enhancement of the effectiveness of AMISOM and the Somali security forces.

At this juncture, I would like to reiterate four critical issues that require the Council's attention in our collective efforts to enhance AMISOM operations.

First, there is a clear justification for the renewal of AMISOM's mandate in the light of the progress made in the creation of a conducive environment in the political process, but also the continued security challenges encountered in Somalia. It is important, as recommended during the summit of the Heads of State and Government of the troop- and police-contributing countries of AMISOM, that the mandate be renewed and the current authorized AMISOM force of 22,126 uniformed personnel and 70 civilians be supported. Those are the minimum essential requirements for the conduct of renewed AMISOM offensive operations in Somalia. The AU Peace and Security Council will consider the situation in Somalia on 28 April in Addis Ababa, with a view to recommending that the Security Council authorize the renewal of AMISOM's mandate.

Secondly, AMISOM's strategy needs to be adapted to effectively cope with the ongoing and evolving security challenges. AMISOM strategy must embrace more targeted operations involving holding, offensive and pursuit operations. That approach will complement the territorial offensive operation aimed at recovering territories from Al-Shaabab by undertaking more deliberate intelligence-driven operations to further degrade the capabilities of that terrorist group. The African Union Commission has directed the AMISOM leadership to commence planning for this new strategy and would welcome the Council's support for its execution.

Thirdly, the mobilization of resources to ensure that the salaries of the Somali security forces are paid in a regular and timely manner and the identification of funds to fill the gap created by the 20 per cent salary cut for AMISOM uniformed personnel are important to raising their morale and keeping them motivated. The support and capacitation of the Somali National Army

remains a central priority in terms of both lethal and non-lethal provisions, within a coordinated framework, in order to facilitate the take-over of primary security responsibilities by the respective Somali institutions. Significant achievements are already being registered.

Fourthly, the deployment of operational enablers and force multipliers are pivotal for the rejuvenation of AMISOM operations. I welcome the pledges of helicopters made by Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The deployment of those helicopters will ensure that AMISOM can conduct targeted operations as well as achieve greater flexibility and protection. In that respect, I would like to urge the Council to facilitate the finalization of letters of assist, bearing in mind that reimbursement for the helicopters should be at a level commensurate with the offensive nature of AMISOM operations in Somalia.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the troop- and police-contributing countries, whose men and women are making immense sacrifices. We would also like to thank our partners for providing support, including financial as well as in-kind contributions, in order to assist AMISOM and the forces of the Federal Government of Somalia in their efforts to stabilize Somalia and to create an enabling space for governance, the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the building of infrastructure for economic and social development to take place.

**The President**: I now call on the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

**President Mohamud**: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council. It is an honour to do so.

A tragedy has been unfolding in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, one that many believe concerns people from my country and neighbouring countries. If all the reports are confirmed, it could be the worst tragedy since the current migration crisis began. We must make every effort to recover the bodies of those who perished and to care for those who survived. I applaud the efforts made by many nations to safeguard and care for migrants and refugees escaping their home nations because of the misfortune of insecurity and hopelessness.

We request that the Governments in the region, and others that have the capacity to do so, investigate the crimes that have been committed by those who lure young people to undertake unsafe journeys on the high seas. The pain, misery and misfortune of all illegal migration and its painful physical and mental costs for all concerned will end only when we have peace, stability and real inclusive economic development in source countries.

Let me begin by thanking the Council for its long-standing support for peace, stability and development in Somalia.

It has been almost four years since my Government was appointed and since Somalia emerged from two decades of war — two decades without a functioning Government in place, and without schools, hospitals or any form of public services. In Brussels in late 2013, I made a pledge on behalf of Somalia to pursue peace and prosperity. That pledge had been central to my original six-pillar policy, which provided a foundation for the subsequent New Deal Compact for Somalia. At the heart of my Brussels pledge lay the pursuit of three imperative elements, namely, a secure Somalia, a democratic Somalia and a progressive and prosperous Somalia.

In 2013, the Somali Government agreed to pursue the political transformation of the nation by drafting and agreeing on a federal constitution, adopting a federal model of governance and holding democratic nationwide elections by September 2016. We laid out that ambitious agenda knowing that we faced the enormous challenge of trying to transform Somalia politically while fighting a war against terror on our own soil and lacking robust capacities or instruments of State. When we first laid out those historic plans, Somalia had limited functioning ministries and human resources, limited domestic revenue streams to speak of and no domestic planning or management capacity to drive forward and sustain the desired reforms in the country.

Along with the necessary political transformation, we needed to build a secure Somalia. Our national armed forces were decimated. Our soldiers, police and security personnel lacked formal training, capacity-building or salaries for almost 22 years. Al-Shabaab had emerged from the conflict, taking advantage of non-existent State institutions, and began its campaign of terror in Somalia and neighbouring countries. Security must provide the conditions for development to flourish, and Somalia needed development desperately. We had lost two generations of people who had not even

been able to go to school. There were no jobs, no public services and very little hope among our young people, who make up the majority of our population.

Somalia has lived a lifetime over the past four years. Our transformation has been rapid. Despite all of the challenges, Somalia has made extraordinary progress, of which we are proud and which ought to make our partners proud too. With the end of the constitutionally mandated terms of the Federal Government and Parliament, the latter half of 2016 will be a decisive time for Somalia. Last week, we successfully agreed the implementation road map for the 2016 electoral process. That means that we are on track to undergo the historic first democratic electoral process in 47 years in Somalia. I will not go into all the details of the 2016 election. However, let me draw attention to several important facts.

First, the process will be uniform throughout Somalia to ensure national legitimacy. Secondly, a dispute-resolution process will support the elections to ensure that we are able to respond to any concerns and immediately address them to avoid conflicts. Thirdly, a lower- and an upper-house will be elected. Fourthly, 30 per cent of the seats in the electoral process and emerging ninth Parliament's Federal members will be identified and specifically reserved for women. In 2012, when my Government was elected, just 135 elders were involved in the selection of our members of Parliament. In 2016, while elders will still play a pivotal role, an electoral college of almost 14,000 people will ultimately make the decision about who will represent the nation. That is great progress.

We are committed to ensuring that there are no impediments to the timely implementation of the electoral process, including with regard to the freedom of expression, or any extension of the constitutionally mandated term limits of the legislature and executive. This year's electoral process takes us one step closer to universal suffrage. We recognize the importance of a clear political vision and path and have engaged in twin-track planning in support of one-person/one-vote elections, supported by a capable national independent electoral commission in 2020. Somalia's Federal Constitution sets out the foundation for peaceful politics in Somalia. We are pushing ahead to complete the review of priority chapters of the Provisional Federal Constitution by the end of 2016.

Nationwide consultations with Somalis in all Federal and emerging member states will be essential to ensuring broad-based consensus and ownership. Our Government is genuinely committed to that and strongly believes in its value. During the past three years, we successfully established three out of the four Federal member states. We are working hard to complete the state-formation process in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle and to reach agreement on clarifying the status of the region of Benadir, the capital city of Somalia.

While substantial progress has been made on the security front, with almost 80 per cent of the country liberated from Al-Shabaab, we acknowledge, with great sadness and frustration, that the security environment at present is an inhibiting factor for the development of both the Government institutions and the people of Somalia. Furthermore, the current security environment remains a root cause for the significant humanitarian situation and the ongoing assistance requirements in Somalia.

I wish to recognize and commend the valiant efforts of the Somali national security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the fight against Al-Shabaab. That fight is not over. We cannot, and will not, quit before it is successfully completed. Further resources and commitment are needed now more than ever to chop off the head of the venomous snake of terror once and for all. We strongly reiterate the need for international support for reinvigorated AMISOM and Somali National Army (SNA) operations. The February Djibouti Declaration was unequivocal in that partners must continue to provide sustainable funding for both AMISOM and the SNA forces to fulfil their mandates. The Declaration was also clear on the urgent need for a structural overhaul of how AMISOM is commanded. We must be confident that a central command structure will be put in place to support a coordinated and successful offensive in the near future.

My Government has been working hard to strengthen the capacity and accountability of Somali security institutions throughout the country so that we are ready to assume control of our own security and release AMISOM from its current commitment. We are in the process of developing financially sustainable plans for the army — the Gulwaade plan — and the police — the Heegan plan — under a national security architecture, which is informed by the public expenditure review conducted by the World Bank and the United Nations. Articulating and agreeing on the

State structures that will oversee the development of our security services has been the focus of my Government over the past several months. I am very pleased that the draft national security policy, endorsed by the National Security Council, is scheduled to be discussed through consultative meetings in each regional member state capital. The first meeting will commence next week, with a culminating national forum scheduled for mid-May. That includes a reinvigoration of the National Security Council to include regional representation at the highest level of decision-making. The national threat assessment has been completed, and the national security architecture planning is under way. Its completion is predicated on the completion of the national security policy that outlines guiding principles on Federal and regional security-related institutions' roles and missions.

International support to the Somali security sector is essential. My Government has taken steps to ensure increased transparency in security sector reform, including enhanced monitoring systems, the registration of all personnel and their regular payment. We are pushing ahead with national force integration. The National Commission for Somali National Army Integration has integrated four SNA battalions in the Jubbaland region and one headquarters company of female soldiers. I am pleased to report elements of the newly integrated battalions have conducted joint operations with Danab forces in coordination with the AMISOM and other international partners. Two more battalions are in the pipeline for integration by July in Jubbaland and, thanks to the recently approved United Nations support package to Puntland, the National Commission for Somali National Army Integration is scheduled to start a process for the integration of 3,000 Puntland soldiers within the next month.

However, we cannot ignore the one element that would have the most rapid and greatest impact on the development of Somalia's own forces, that is, the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo. We have made solid improvements in weapons and ammunition management and compliance with notification, reporting and controls. In the past six months, we marked more than 4,500 weapons, established a weapon and ammunition technical working group and agreed upon the terms of reference for the joint verification team. We have held consultative meetings to initiate the drafting of a road map to develop a comprehensive national framework governing the full life cycle of weapons and ammunition, and we have made significant improvements in complying with Security Council arms notification requirements.

Despite that improvement and the calls of the different Security Council resolutions to our international partners to provide non-lethal weapons to Somalia, we are still hindered by the partial embargo. We therefore request members of the Security Council for the total lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia. That will enhance our national capabilities to confront and defeat international terrorism at home and provide the best protection for our citizens, while safeguarding our democratic and developmental future against violent and radicalized spoilers. The arms embargo, and indeed the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group, was put in place for good reasons and in the interests of Somalia — and we are very grateful for that — but Somalia has changed dramatically. Those instruments are outdated and restrictive at best, and misleading and undermining at worst

Today the threat in Somalia is not so much due to a lack of institutional capacity or oversight mechanisms, but to terrorism and violent extremism. Let us focus on mechanisms that deal effectively with the disastrous, international phenomenon that is terrorism. If Somalia is to successfully defeat Al-Shabaab once and for all and effectively rebuild an inclusive nation, then the Security Council must support its efforts through all possible means. We therefore request once again the complete lifting of the arms embargo and a review of the mandate of the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group. Such a review should take place in the light of the regenerated political, security, economic and financial progress made by my Government towards the peace and stability of Somalia. The outcome of the review should reflect the understanding that Somalia is no longer at war with itself, but that Somalis are fighting alongside all concerned Member States to make our world a safer place for all.

Somalia's progress is illustrated clearly in the area of public financial management reform. Today, Somalia has a working Central Bank, overseen by a functioning Board of Directors. The offices of the Accountant-General and the independent Auditor-General are functioning. Furthermore, the internationally recognized Financial Governance Committee of Somalia is in place, which reports regularly and publicly and includes representatives of members from the international financial institutions, including the

World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank.

In parallel to robust governance and oversight progress, the public financial management legislative environment is also being developed. The Federal Parliament recently ratified three important bills, namley, the Public Procurement, Concession and Disposal Bill, the Anti-Money-Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Bill and the Audit Bill. And the Cabinet has approved the Public Finance Management Bill.

I draw the Council's attention to the significance of Somalia's first article IV consultation by the International Monetary Fund in 25 years. The consultation confirmed Somalia's 2015 economic growth of 3.7 per cent. That is clear evidence that Somalia is on an aggressive path towards reform, and we are very grateful for the support that our international partners have provided over the years. Somalia has agreed with the International Monetary Fund to a reform programme for the period from May 2016 to April 2017, which focuses on implementing prudent fiscal policies while strengthening institutional capacity for macroeconomic financial management. The programme will enhance governance and economic statistical capacity, strengthen fiscal discipline, rebuild capacity for monetary policy management and foster financial sector development as a basis for supporting economic growth. It will be a key step in the process liquidating the arrears and the normalization of relations with international financial institutions as a whole.

Those achievements clearly demonstrate that the Federal Government has developed both the capacity and the proper oversight mechanisms to handle public finances responsibly, transparently and in accordance with international best practices.In addition, last February, I launched the Open Government initiative to ensure that information relevant to Government activities was made available to the public in order to promote transparency, accountability and participation.

Of course, systems are not the only thing that Somalia needs. I draw the Council's attention to the urgent need to develop key economic sectors that will provide all Somalis with greater opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. I welcome the international community's efforts to expand support for high priority economic sectors and youth employment, including through vocational training and skills development. Generating support for regional economic initiatives, especially for infrastructure development, will be essential for regional economic growth and cooperation.

I cannot urge strongly enough the need for a comprehensive approach to equipping Somali youth with tools that will enable them to play a positive role in bringing peace, social progress and economic prosperity to Somalia. In that regard, in line with resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, we welcome the development of a national youth policy and the United Nations Strategy for Youth in Somalia.

The year 2016 marks the final year of the Somali Compact established in Brussels in 2013. The Compact has played a crucial role in improving the partnership, with mutual accountability between the Government and the international community, and in furthering the political, security and development progress in Somalia. We look forward to developing that next phase of international engagement in Somalia, based on a shared set of principles and a renewal of the joint partnerships within Somalia and with its partners. Work is now progressing on a three-year national development plan, which will include political and security elements so that the holistic approach forged through the Somali Compact is not lost. The principles that guide the partnership between the Government and the international community after the Compact ends will be developed and agreed upon in the corning months.

Programmes and resources must be further aligned to Somalia's national priorities. In particular, concrete steps must be taken to deliver more assistance through country systems, in response to improvements in the Government's budget, expenditures and financial governance systems. I am proud to say that Somalia is a beautiful country with great economic opportunity, both at sea and on land. Our newly adopted foreign policy has investment at its heart, and in the past few years our Government has been working to create an environment conducive to investment in all our key priority sectors.

Tackling terrorism, rebuilding an inclusive State and playing a meaningful role in our region and the wider world requires sustainable development, which I am certain we can nurture and sustain with the wealth of our nation. While we are grateful for the aid that our partners have provided, and continue to provide, to us, we strongly encourage them and their entrepreneurs to invest in Somalia for the social and economic benefit

of both themselves and the Somali people. Indeed, with the wealth of our resources, Somalia is truly a place where investment will most certainly meet with great profitable opportunities.

In conclusion, let me once again thank the Council for its unwavering support for Somalia. The strength of the Council members' commitment, combined with our people and the Government's support and partnership on the ground, has today brought forward a Somalia at one, a Somalia at peace with itself and focused on the collective achievement of national stability, progress and prosperity. Somalia has turned the corner, and there is absolutely no turning back to the dark past. It is my most earnest desire that what is discussed here and the decisions taken will be in the best interests of a united Somalia, once again one Somalia — a sovereign, secure, democratic and Federal Somalia at peace with itself and the world, for the benefit of its people.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my gratitude and that of the Somali people for the engagement of our international partners, including the AMISOM troops on the ground, with the support provided to them by partners. Today, Somalia is holding elections after 47 years. The last election that took place in Somalia was in 1969. The people who participated in that election are today retired, at best. A new nation is experiencing a new, good beginning.

**The President**: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

**Mr. Rycroft** (United Kingdom): I would like to thank all our briefers this morning. Let me take this chance to commend President Mohamud for his leadership. Under his guidance, we have witnessed progress in Somalia that was once thought impossible. He has spearheaded Somalia's return to the international community. As he just stated, Somalia has turned the corner and there is no turning back. I join others in welcoming him to the Security Council. I also warmly welcome Special Representative Keating on his first address in the Chamber in his new role.

Tomorrow will mark the first anniversary of the Al-Shabaab attack against the United Nations compound in Puntland. Six people were killed that day; four were UNICEF staff. Their lives were cruelly cut short because they dared to help to build a better Somalia, one of peace, one free from polio, one where all children could receive an education. As we mourn and remember our colleagues and all the victims of terrorism in Somalia, let us reaffirm our commitment today to the future that they dared to build.

Since Prime Minister Cameron hosted the London Conference on Somalia in 2012, the British commitment has involved the reopening of our Embassy, an increase in our development assistance and now the deployment of personnel to the United Nations. That commitment will only be strengthen in the years ahead. Such commitments have never been more vital. This is a crucial year for Somalia's future prosperity and stability. For me, it comes down to three things, namely, elections, security and partnership.

First, the election process in August will be a landmark moment in Somalia's political development. The electoral process needs to be transparent, to deliver on time and to be inclusive. Such an electoral process will cement Somalia's positive trajectory to democracy. There can be no place at the table for any group or individual who seeks to deliberately undermine the process. I welcome the decision on an electoral process and the recent agreement on an implementation plan by the National Leaders Forum. It is important now to translate that into action. The United Nations and the international community stand ready to support the process, and in doing so we commit to help Somalia to reach that most vital of goals, that is, one-person/one-vote elections in 2020.

But no country can develop successfully if it leaves half its population behind, and we therefore welcome the commitment to reserve 30 per cent of the seats in both Houses for women. That is not a women's issue; it is a peace issue. Engaging women at all levels of decision-making is absolutely crucial to development and stability.

The second top issue is security. One of the most sacred responsibilities of any State is to protect its citizens. We have seen the Federal Government in Somalia take welcome steps towards that goal in its high-level partnership commitments on security sector reform and the agreement to a national security policy with the interim regional administrations. I urge the Government to continue those efforts. For them to succeed, security sector reform and the development of the Somali National Army and police force need to be fully coordinated with donors. They also need to be *accountable and transparent.*

In the meantime, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) of course remains a critical enabler

to progress. I would like to commend the bravery of the AMISOM men and women and to offer my condolences for the losses suffered by troop-contributing countries. History will show the immense contribution made by AMISOM to peace in Somalia. The commitments at the recent summit in Djibouti to an early resumption of offensive operations against Al-Shabaab is very welcome. Better coordination and command and control will be essential to success. The United Kingdom stands ready to assist where we can, and that is why we are deploying British military personnel to the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, some of whom have just arrived in Somalia.

My final point concerns partnership. The year 2016 is the final one for the current Somali Compact. The Compact has provided a crucial framework for partnership between the international community and Somalia. We now need to build on that and to agree on a compact type of agreement for 2017 and beyond, which should strengthen the links between Somalia's political, security and development tracks and reaffirm the principles and shared values that bind us together. A central element of the agreement will be the Somalia national development plan, and we welcome the progress made in developing it.

As Somalia works towards these three priorities — elections, security, partnership — the commitments of the international community, including the Security Council, remain essential. But as my Deputy saw first-hand when he visited Mogadishu last week, it is clear that any international commitment will be met with equal if not more dedication by the people living and working in Somalia. Whether they are representatives of the Federal Government, civil society or AMISOM, they all continue to serve bravely with an undiminished commitment to a stable, secure and prosperous Somalia.

When the history books are written, let them say that 2016 was a truly decisive year, a year when Somali's fragile gains were consolidated and strengthened by the most representative and democratic electoral process in a generation. In achieving that goal, President Mohamud, you will have the resolute support of the Security Council.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important meeting. I would like to welcome Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia; Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia.

This year is of utmost importance for Somalia, as we expect elections to be held at the end of August, leading, for only the second time in 27 years, to a peaceful transition of power in that brotherly country. In this regard, my delegation commends the efforts made by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and his Government to overcome all obstacles and continuously work to reach out to all Somalis. This has led to a comprehensive, integrated Somali-owned political process that is supported by all international and regional Powers.

We welcome the efforts made by all Somalis, particularly the leaders of the various federal regions through the Somali Leaders Forum held at the beginning of this month, and the agreement reached on all items related to the electoral process. My delegation stresses its support for Somali national efforts in this regard. We emphasize that the electoral process must be completed within the set time frame and involve the largest possible number of Somalis, including women and young people. We call on the international community to ensure that the funding necessary for the electoral process and its security is in place.

Progress made on the political front would not have been possible without progress on the security front. This is allowed political leaders to work in freedom as the strength of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab has declined. Thanks to the successful security operations led by both African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army, members of Al-Shabaab have been expelled from more than 90 Somali cities. Their military capabilities have been degraded to the lowest level in years. We commend AMISOM and the Somali National Army for the sacrifices they have made in recent times.

My delegation stresses the need for the international community to ensure that predictable and secure material support is provided to AMISOM forces. This support is needed; the international community must not abandon its commitment to the Mission. We call on Member States to support the Somali Government's efforts to retrain and rehabilitate its army and redraft

the national security strategy. Somali forces must be appropriately armed in order to prosecute the necessary military operations against Al-Shabaab. That would ensure durable peace and security and allow for the withdrawal of AMISOM at the appropriate time.

These achievements must be protected by taking practical steps to ensure peace and security for the Somali people. We must work to coordinate international efforts in support of the Somali Government and the federal regions and provide essential services to areas liberated from Al-Shabaab. This would be the best proof of the international community's support for economic revitalization in Somalia. We must also coordinate humanitarian efforts, particularly in the health sector, especially when it comes to maternal and child health. Further, support for the rule of law must be provided in those regions.

Accordingly, my delegation renews its call for support for the friendly Somali people, which was stressed during the visit to Somalia earlier this month by the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he underscored the need to support the health and education sectors, training of Somali medical cadres, the rebuilding of the Somali military hospital, the return of the Egyptian educational mission to Mogadishu to set up two schools there, the training of cadres in the field of agriculture, and reviewing the possibility of setting up tripartite cooperation to train military cadres, including the Coast Guard, in Somalia.

In Egypt, a study has been undertaken to provide technical help to the Somali Parliament. Training is being considered for the fields of investment, contract drafting and natural-resource protection. We shall act to coordinate Arab humanitarian and medical efforts in order to meet the needs of the country. We also welcome the Secretary-General's efforts in cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions in support of economic growth in Somalia and the reduction of poverty.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the need to coordinate international efforts in support of Somalia in order to derive the greatest possible value from such efforts. We stress our commitment to providing support to the Somali people and Government in deed, and not just in word, and to coordinating all efforts — bilateral, regional and international — in this regard.

**Mr. Pressman** (United States of America): I welcome President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to New York and thank him for being here. We appreciate the important work he is doing, his optimism about Somalia's future and the clear portrait he has painted of the opportunities and the challenges his nation faces at this pivotal moment. I would also like to thank Special Representative Keating for his briefing and for his efforts to galvanize and ensure the coherence of the international effort in Somalia.

I also thank Ambassador António for his briefing; certainly the strong partnership between the African Union and the United Nations has been one of the keys to the successes we have achieved to date, and this partnership will be critical as we move forward. To this end, at our next discussion on Somalia, we would welcome the chance to hear from Special Representative Madeira, whose insights into the situation in Somalia could be useful for us to consider as we approach the mandate renewal for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) next month.

One thing is certain — the Somali people are fighting for the future of their country. The Al-Shabaab campaign of terrorism, which has cost the lives of so many people, must only strengthen our determination to make progress in securing a peaceful and prosperous future for the Somali people. To achieve success, we need to act purposefully, quickly and collectively in order to help the Somali people build strong institutions of democratic governance and rule of law, to continue taking the fight to Al-Shabaab and to help the nearly 5 million Somalis who cannot meet their basic daily needs without assistance.

It is an election year in Somalia, as the President has stated and as we all know, and the Government's tenacious work to reach an agreement on an electoral model was an important step forward. Our hope is that the Somali Parliament can finalize the implementation plan quickly and that the next steps can proceed swiftly in the spring and summer — steps such as launching voter-education programmes, vetting candidates, finalizing financing and security modalities and other efforts to help put voting structures in place. This year's vote is essential, not just in itself but because it is a critical step towards universal elections in 2020, based on one person/one vote.

Against that backdrop, the United States welcomes the progress that the Somali Government has made with the state-formation process over the past three years. For the first time in decades, the map of Somalia's Federal states is nearly complete. We encourage the

Government to continue those efforts and to finalize the formation of the Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle regions. As the election season approaches, time is of the essence, if Somalia is to ensure that those two regions can also take part in the electoral process later this year. Their transition to Federal state status is part of that.

Creating an atmosphere where inclusive politics can thrive requires security, and there major challenges persist. There is no question that, thanks principally to the efforts of the African Union and the countries of the region, acting through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and with the support of the United Nations, security in Somalia has improved considerably. We commend the bravery of the AMISOM troops and the Somali soldiers and pay particular tribute to the willingness of Ethiopia and Kenya to continue to lead the fight against terrorism in the Horn of Africa. For its part, the United States will continue to use the tools at its disposal, financial, diplomatic, intelligence and military, to help dismantle Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups.

Both AMISOM and the Somali National Army must press the offensive against Al-Shabaab. In particular, we urge them to initiate coordinated planning aimed at recapturing the Juba River Valley. Their success will create much-needed space for political and economic development throughout the country. As part of that effort, we echo the call of President Mohamud and Mr. Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, for enhanced international support for the creation of a capable, professional and inclusive Somali National Army that respects international humanitarian law.

In order to achieve that ambitious goal, the unique partnership among AMISOM, the Somali National Army, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia requires close cooperation and coordination. That includes a number of steps, including making sure that AMISOM has the right equipment and that it is operationally sound, including through the provision of critical enablers to the Mission. That support is vital to ensuring that both AMISOM and the Somali National Army can bring further military pressure to bear on Al-Shabaab and avoid costly losses such as the harrowing ones they have suffered in recent months. What comes after an area is liberated from Al-Shabaab has a direct connection with how we, Somalia and the international community, can combat terrorism. We agree on the imperative of creating space for inclusive politics, pursuing economic recovery, reducing unemployment among young people, enhancing education and encouraging further defections from Al-Shabaab by providing a future for disengaged combatants.

Those are very difficult steps, to be sure, but they can be helped by promulgating a coordinated and comprehensive national security policy that includes the establishment of clear police, justice and corrections models for Somalia in the context of federalism. Security advances will not be sustainable and cannot take root unless respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is central and safeguarded. In connection with that, we encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to set up a human rights commission to ensure respect for the freedom of expression, make additional progress on ending the use of child soldiers and hold security forces accountable for violations, including those related to sexual exploitation and abuse. All security forces in Somalia, including the Somali National Army and AMISOM, must respect human rights.

In the face of the challenges we are confronting, the international community must do its part to support Somalia's progress by engaging in actions that empower rather than exploit the nation's economy. With that in mind, we emphasize that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in Somalia's waters has the potential to stoke instability in an already fragile nation.

Lastly, the chronic humanitarian crisis in Somalia demands our attention. Too many people, some 40 per cent of the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance; too many, more than 1.1 million, are suffering from displacement; and too many children are malnourished. Those challenges have been exacerbated by the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon. The United States has been at the forefront of raising international awareness about El Niño's impact in Africa, while partnering with governmental and non-governmental aid operations to prevent, mitigate and respond to emergency needs related to food, water and health. In addition to strengthening financial institutions in Somalia, the United States Government has provided more than $240 million in humanitarian aid since October 2014, supporting emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and health-care programmes, among other forms of

lifesaving assistance, and has invested in resilience programming to help bolster the ability of households and communities to weather such shocks. Together, we must do more. We urge the international community to support the humanitarian response plan for 2016.

In conclusion, while we have made truly important gains, we have a long way to go. We must maintain a sharp focus, steady coordination and a steadfast commitment to ensuring that stability takes root and that ultimately peace prevails once and for all in Somalia, for all Somalis.

**Mr. Ilichev** (Russian Federation): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the President of Somalia, His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and in general we share the views that he has expressed. We would like to thank Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, for his comprehensive briefing on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. We are grateful to the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Mr. Téte António, for his explanation of that pan-African organization's approaches to the settlement in Somalia.

We were pleased to see that the Somali National Forum held on 12 April confirmed the planned parameters for the general elections scheduled for August and September and the unacceptability of failing to keep to the established timetable.

The security situation, however, continues to be worrisome. We are seeing an increase in the activity of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group and trends that suggest changes in its tactics. According to international experts, the extremists have become more mobile and are focusing on carrying out their terrorist attacks where they can have the greatest international impact, coordinating their activities with various international accomplices. We have been obliged to recognize the fact that Al-Shabaab members have recently been attacking military bases as well as the so-called soft civilian targets.

In that regard, we believe that it is essential to maintain military pressure on Somali extremists, and we urge the international community to continue its efforts to increase the capacity of the Somali army and the African Union Mission in Somalia. The military-political situation in the country demands that the African Union peacekeepers and Somali security forces step up their combat efforts against Al-Shabaab and that the United Nations expand its logistical and technical support in accordance with resolution 2245 (2015), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia.

In our view, one of the Somali authorities' priorities at this stage is the process of building the State and federalization, and completing the formation of the Federal states is particularly high on that agenda. We cannot allow the remaining disagreements to have a negative impact on the country's electoral process.

On the social and humanitarian front, the continuing drought in Puntland and Somaliland, which has brought hundreds of thousands to the verge of starvation, is very worrying. We urge the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected regions in order to supply the population with drinking water, food and medicines. Russia has been regularly providing humanitarian assistance to the Federal Government of Somalia and Somali refugees in neighbouring countries through targeted contributions to the appropriate United Nations funds, with our total assistance exceeding $15 million for the period from 2011 to 2015. We share the belief that currently there is a need to not only step up international donations to resolve specific economic and social issues, but also to ensure comprehensive support to the Federal Government to provide financial and humanitarian assistance to people.

At the same time, we call for the strict implementation of the provisions of resolution 2275 (2016) on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, including, inter alia, the necessary holding this year of parliamentary elections on the basis of the agreed electoral model and the Government's implementation of the road map for 2020, as well as accelerating work on the drafting of a new Constitution for the country. The most important tasks for the Government now are to strengthen the security sector, bolster the foundations of federalism and advance sustainable national and inter-ethnic reconciliation in Somalia.

**Mr. Bermúdez** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to commend you, Mr. President, for convening today's informative meeting. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Michael Keating, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Ambassador Téte António, for their briefings. I also

welcome His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who is honouring us with his presence.

I would like to underscore the agreement reached between the Federal Government of Somalia and Puntland, which paves the way for the electoral process of 2016 and for the preparation of the universal elections of 2020, which will take place in the framework of one person, one vote. The agreement represents a positive outcome of the National Leaders Forum, which was held in Mogadishu between 9 and 12 April.

I believe it is important to emphasize the renewed pledge by the Federal Government of Somalia that there will be no extension of the limits of the established constitutional mandate for the legislative and executive branches and that elections for those branches will be held in August 2016; that the constitutional reform will be finalized; and that the Government will determine the number and location of the federal states of Somalia in 2016 in order to fulfil the goals of the federal project. We also welcome the upcoming holding of the National Leaders Forum, which will be followed by a constitutional conference in Garowe in May. A peaceful and transparent electoral process in 2016 will mark a milestone for all Somalis and will be critical to the continued progress of the country towards democracy and stability.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the international community must work in an increasingly close and coordinated manner with the regional administrations and the federal Government to prioritize capacity-building and the strengthening of institutions at the regional level to help regional administrations consolidate their authority and be able to establish step by step the basic conditions for governance, security and the provision of basic services for local populations. My delegation is pleased that the new legislative framework provides that 30 per cent of the parliamentary seats are to be reserved for women in each state member of the federation, and with the emphasis on the importance of increasing participation by women and young people in the political processes.

I cannot fail to mention Uruguay's concern about the continuing threat posed by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, which continues to lurk in the shadows, despite the progress made in fighting the extremists and the alleged or theoretical loss of their firepower. The fight against Al-Shabaab requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. There must be continued improvement of the interaction with all of civil society in Somalia — including women, young people, businesses and religious leaders — so as to ensure that they form an integral part of the various political processes under way. We underscore the peace and reconciliation agreement that was reached at the end of March among the leaders and representatives of Jubaland and Marehan, which will strengthen the unity in the fight against the extremists.

Security sector reform is vital, in particular the rapid and effective development of the Somali National Army, including a planned and coordinated integration of current regional forces to help facilitate the more effective participation of the Somali National Army in joint operations with the African Union Mission in Somalia so that the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, including the police, can assume a greater role in maintaining peace and security and in protecting Somali citizens. In that regard, we welcome the results of the consultative conference on police reform in Somalia, which took place in Nairobi from 21 to 24 March. Many of the outcomes of that conference will be incorporated into a new 2017-2025 Heegan plan.

My delegation places particular emphasis on the need to protect civilians, especially the most vulnerable groups, namely, children, young people, women and the elderly, and we call upon the Federal Government of Somalia to choose the path of mediation and seek out stability, especially in areas where access to humanitarian assistance and supplies is crucial. At the same time, we deplore the fact that foreign and national forces operating in Somalia continue to carry out abuses, attack civilians and violate international humanitarian law.

Finally, I wish to express Uruguay's support for the process that the Federal Government of Somalia is carrying out, which is recognized as the most inclusive process in recent years.

**Mr. González de Linares Palou** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important briefing on the situation in Somalia. I want to welcome President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and commend him for his leadership. I also want to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Michael Keating, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Ambassador Téte António.

One of the key priorities for Spain in the Security Council is to make headway in efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia in the wake of so many years of senseless violence and conflict. There still a long road ahead, but considering the extraordinary difficulties that the Somali people and its leaders have managed to overcome in recent years, we have no doubt that success is within grasp. It is now the responsibility of everybody to not let such success slip from our fingers.

The year 2016 is crucial for various reasons. First, in the political sphere, the Somali leadership just approved the electoral process for 2016, after innumerable efforts and an encouraging agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and Puntland. We welcome that agreement and trust that the Federal Parliament will soon ratify it and that its provisions will be enacted. The adopted format seems to be the most feasible at present and strikes a key balance between two essential elements in the politics of Somali society: the regions, on the one hand, and the clans, on the other. Spain would like to congratulate the Government of Somalia on its decision to set aside 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for women, who must continue to play a key role in the Somali political process, as indeed should civil society as a whole.

The successful conclusion of the electoral process in August 2016, as provided for in the Constitution, is a key step towards making further progress in the establishment of peace in and the stabilization of Somalia so that universal elections can be held in 2020 under the formula of one person, one vote.

We urge the Somali leadership to stick to the path of dialogue and agreement, and to avoid relapsing back into the divisions that derailed the political process in the past. As I said earlier, success is within grasp, but it is incredibly fragile. Let us not forget that a political crisis is capable of destroying in just a matter of days the costly progress that took years to achieve. We therefore now have a historic responsibility. In that regard, we must not lose sight of the importance of making progress in the constitutional review process. In addition, with respect to federal State-building, Spain, which has always recognized the territorial integrity of Somalia, hopes that significant progress will soon be made in Hiran and Middle Shabelle in order to establish a new interim administration, and we trust that reconciliation efforts between clans will be stepped up.

Secondly, turning to the security sector, we robustly condemn the terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab against the Somali people, their representatives, officials and institutions. We also condemn the attacks carried out against the contingents of the countries of the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), who are fighting shoulder to shoulder with Somali forces in order to restore stability and peace in Somalia. We wish to express our full solidarity with the people and Government of Somalia, AMISOM and the Somali security forces.

Somalians should have no doubt on two issues. First, Al-Shabaab can be destroyed and the future Somalia will be defined not by terrorists but by the people of Somalia. Secondly, AMISOM and the Somali National Army will always be on their side. Al-Shabaab represents the greatest threat to the security and stability of Somalia and to the entire Horn of Africa region. Its terrorist activities over the past year show that the group continues to be active, that it has great operational capacity, and that it intends to wreak the greatest possible havoc. Given that challenge, we cannot let down our guard.

After several challenging months, AMISOM and the Somali forces have taken the initiative, although it remains essential that they work in a coordinated fashion to defeat Al-Shabaab. We do not doubt that this is possible, although we continue to insist that AMISOM must develop a more unified and effective command-and-control structure, in line with the recommendations of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. To that end, it will be necessary to build on the key understanding established at the recent summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries of AMISOM, held in Djibouti, which was an important step forward in the right direction.

It is urgent that AMISOM have strengthened and centralized intelligence capacity in place, and we hope that the already committed enabling elements that the Mission needs will be made available as soon as possible. All of that is crucial in order to respond to the asymmetric war tactics employed by Al-Shabaab. The role of the Somali National Army and police is, of course, vital to the achievement of that goal. Both institutions must gradually assume greater responsibility, commensurate with the security demanded by the Somali people, with a view to developing an exit strategy for AMISOM. To that end, we must redouble our efforts to achieve rapid

and substantive progress in the area of security sector reform. We urge the Somali authorities to effectively implement the relevant plans.

The Somali army and police should increase their role and effectiveness so as to guarantee security in the areas freed from Al-Shabaab, and also to secure the main supply routes. We wish to stress that the fight against Al-Shabaab is more than a military operation. It should be rooted in a firm strategy that prevents radicalization and recruitment from various sectors of the Somali population, in particular youth. Young people must believe that Somali institutions and the international community are on their side. The fight against Al-Shabaab must take place within the framework of respect for the political leadership and human rights, and go hand in hand with genuine and systematic efforts to ensure security, the provision of basic services and opportunities for the populations in recovered areas.

For my third point, which is no less important, I wish to speak about the grave humanitarian situation. Some 4.9 million Somalis are in need of humanitarian aid. The drought that is racking the north of the country, in particular Somaliland and Puntland, as a result of the weather phenomenon known as El Niño has left some 900,000 individuals facing severe malnutrition. That tragic situation, exacerbated by desertification, is unacceptable and unsustainable. Alleviating the humanitarian emergency faced by Somalia is essential in building on the efforts made in the area of politics and security, given that all of those dimensions are interrelated.

Rebuilding Somalia will require the rebuilding of Somalians' trust in their institutions. It is therefore necessary that members of civil society perceive a tangible improvement in their quality of life — in their access not only to water and food, but also to education and employment. All of that will ultimately determine the success of the Somali process and the ultimate defeat of Al-Shabaab.

Our leaders are preparing to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change next Friday in these very Headquarters. We must now be more aware than ever that climate change is neither an abstract issue nor a problem for the future. It is a threat that is already shaping the life expectancy of millions of people around the world, thrusting specific populations and countries, such as Somalia, into a situation of environmental, economic and social stress, with direct repercussions for international peace and security. This is a horizontal and structural challenge that we must rise to meet with all resources as soon as we have them.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that Spain is convinced that the establishment of peace and stability in and the development of Somalia will not be possible without the reconstruction of the Somali State and civil society. We can achieve those goals only if we have a unified and committed leadership that acts in the interests of all Somalians. The United Nations, regional organizations and countries that have friendly relations with Somalia will continue to support the country on that path. With every passing month, we are increasingly convinced that we are drawing closer to a time in which Somalians can take full responsibility of their own future.

**Mr. Yoshikawa** (Japan): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this timely meeting in the presence of the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. I would like to express my appreciation to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud for joining us today in the Security Council, and commend his leadership. I also thank him for his very forceful presentation. Let me also join others in thanking Mr. Michael Keating and Ambassador Téte António for their informative briefings.

After a long endeavours, Somalia is at last moving towards State-building. This year is especially crucial for the political transition process in Somalia. Successful implementation of the electoral process is a test case. Japan welcomes the decision by the federal Government of Somalia on an electoral model for 2016 based on inclusive, Somali-led discussions. We are also delighted at the very encouraging news on the National Leaders Forum on 12 April, where the detailed structures and modalities of the electoral process were agreed among the Somali leaders. It is now important to deliver on the electoral process in August, as expected. We call upon all parties of Somali to engage constructively towards that end. There is an urgent need to make progress on the completion of the State formation and constitutional review processes and on the political road map in order to realize a one person/one vote election by 2020.

We look forward to the constitutional conference producing a positive outcome in May. The Security Council should continue to do all that it can, and Japan fully supported the adoption of resolution 2275 (2016),

which extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until the end of March of next year.

Turning to the security aspect, Al-Shabaab still remains a major threat. Japan strongly condemns all territorial attacks and pays tribute to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army for their work under the harsh conditions on the ground. In order to prevent Al-Shabaab from making further gains, we believe that it is crucial that offensive operations against it be carried out in an even more closely coordinated manner. We welcome the holding of the recent summit of the troop- and police-contributing countries to AMISOM, as well as the commitment to improving coordination within AMISOM as a step in that direction.

Security sector reform is also important. The coordinated integration of regional forces in the Somali National Army will make joint operations with AMISOM more effective. Extending basic policing services throughout the country, including within the liberated areas, is equally important, as is capacity-building for the maritime police force. We welcome President Mohamud's commitments to push forward those reforms.

Somalia's State-building efforts must be Somali-led, but at the same time be supported by the international community. For its part, Japan recently provided additional assistance in the amount of $38.5 million, which will be implemented by various United Nations agencies. That assistance will be used for State-building in Somalia, enhancing basic social services, strengthening the capacity of the security sector and revitalizing the economy. Assistance for tackling the challenges that I have mentioned today is included, such as support for the establishment of the national electoral commission and strengthening the police force. They will be implemented by ANSOM and the United Nations Development Programme.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Japan's strong commitment to assisting Somalia at this crucial juncture.

**Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to welcome the presence and the statement of His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. I also thank Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, and Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, for their briefings.

The security situation in Somalia, as well as in all of the Horn of Africa, is fragile as a result of the actions of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, the presence of armed groups and criminal organizations and the increase in the trafficking in small arms and light weapons throughout the entire region. The peacebuilding process in Somalia is taking place in a context in which the progress made has not been without difficulties. A year ago, we welcomed the achievements of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the fight against Al-Shabaab. Today, we note with concern the re-emergence of Al-Shabaab, marked by asymmetric bloody attacks carried out against civilians, AMISOM and Somalia's own armed forces. We see how a more assertive Al-Shabaab, with hundreds of combatants, is launching attacks against military targets. We note with concern how AMISOM contingents are barricading themselves in and limiting their security patrols to those of defensive perimeters. We recall with dismay the victims of brutal attacks by Al-Shabaab against civilians, AMISOM and the Somalia's armed forces that resulted in hundreds of deaths over the past six months.

Despite those threats and difficulties, Somalia is making progress in the arduous process of establishing legitimate institutions throughout the country, laying the foundations so that, once peace is achieved, there will be no relapse into conflict. The process is painstaking and challenging. The Somali State is still fighting to establish its presence and authority throughout its entire national territory. Occasionally, the Somali armed forces and local authorities are unable to hold or maintain territory that they have wrested from Al-Shabaab. In that vein, international support to the Somali security sector is essential and must be maintained with increasing transparency, within the framework of the development plans of the Federal Government. It is also vital to support efforts aimed at extending State authority to very corner of the country so that local administrations can provide basic services to their populations. It is essential to shore up the institutional capacity of the country. Only in that way, can it meet the hard challenges that it faces.

In that regard, we also acknowledge the need to address violent extremism in Somalia holistically, going beyond a strictly military approach and rolling out strategies that address the root causes of

radicalization. Given those circumstances, the support of the international community and the commitment of the United Nations need to be more present than ever. Our country is therefore of the opinion that the Security Council must consider supporting the appeal for a lifting of the sanctions, in particular the arms embargo, thereby contributing to strengthening the State and Somalia's armed forces in its fight against Al-Shabaab and other scourges that threaten the well-being and stability of the country.

The United Nations must be more effective in the way it works to cut off sources of funding for Al-Shabaab, while respecting the sovereign right of Somalia to develop its natural resources and ensure subsistence for those communities whose livelihoods depend upon the extraction trade and artisanal trade. Even as the embargo on charcoal has been tightened, Al-Shabaab has merely developed new funding sources of funding, including, among others, racketeering, extorting money from private businesses, blackmailing, holding members of the local population for ransom, extorting fees on transportation and trading illegally in natural resources, as well as donations from the Somali diaspora.

That stands in stark contrast with the revenue challenges facing the Federal Government of Somalia and of the question of how to sustain itself fiscally. One of the primary sources of income is the collection of taxes. However, international corporations in Somalia provide very little revenue to the country. In the specific case of the oil industry, we see how it is seeking to divide the country by taking advantage of the concept of federalism to exploit the State's institutional weakness and secure lucrative contracts that are of little benefit to the sustainable development of the Somali people. In order to address the challenges facing the country, there is a need to strengthen State institutions and bolster capacities for exercising full sovereign control over its natural resources. For instance, illegal fishing in Somalia's exclusive economic zone jeopardizes the survival of thousands of small-scale fishers who, given their economic conditions, are apt to turn to criminal or destabilizing activities.

On another front, I would like to mention the humanitarian situation, which continues to be very complex, with more than 4 million people still requiring humanitarian aid, over 1 million facing food insecurity and over 300,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 58,000 are suffering from severe malnutrition. The needs of the more than 1.1 million displaced persons is urgent, and the recent drought has only made things worse. We call on the international community unconditionally to provide the necessary financial resources to alleviate the pressing humanitarian needs of the Somali population, who have been affected by recurring conflict and economic, social and environmental hardships. Unfortunately, reports speak of difficulties in gaining access to the areas most in need, and the endless negotiations and payment of fees in many part of the country seem to be the norm for humanitarian convoys, particularly in areas where Al-Shabaab is present.

From a political perspective, we welcome the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union that led to the recent decision of the President of Puntland, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, to accept the electoral formula for the 2016 elections. We also stress the vital role played by women in economic, political and social life in Somalia. We therefore commend the Federal Government in Somalia's decision to reserve 30 per cent of available seats for women in the 2016 parliamentary elections.

In that regard, it is important that all political sectors in Somalia understand that it is only in political unity that can they effectively address the phenomenon of terrorism, defeat Al-Shabaab and strengthen their State institutions in order to ensure that Somalia can meet the major challenges that still lie before it. We wish the electoral process every success and call for the deployment of an important security presence to ensure the peaceful holding of elections throughout Somalia.

We underscire the role that the Federal Constitution of Somalia must play as the bedrock of stability and the peaceful development of politics in the country. It will provide the legal framework that will shape the destiny of the people. We call for the review process of the key chapters of the provisional constitution to be completed swiftly. By the same token, we encourage the Federal Government to engage the emerging federal states and their people in the review process and consultations on the development of this Magna Carta for Somalia through a widespread civic education campaign that will achieve a broad and lasting social consensus based on the inclusion of all sectors of society.

Finally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its commitment to the peace, security and

development of Somalia and the entire region of the Horn of Africa.

**Mr. Taula** (New Zealand): We welcome His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and greatly value the opportunity for the Council to hear directly his perspectives on the situation in Somalia. We also thank Mr. Keating and Ambassador Téte António for their updates.

Somalia was one of the defining issues when New Zealand last served on the Security Council. Two decades later, Somalia is in a much better position, but it remains an important item on our agenda, with far-reaching implications for regional peace and security and the fight against terrorism.

We welcome the progress achieved through the bravery and commitment of soldiers and other personnel from the African Union (AU), neighbouring countries, international partners and Somalia itself. As a result, Al-Shabaab has been weakened. There were no successful instances of piracy in the past year. Most importantly, progress has been made towards a functioning Federal Government, with the prospect of a democratic transition this year. This has come at a truly awful cost to Somalia, its neighbours and the AU, and significant challenges lie ahead. Sustained political attention will be required to deal with each of those challenges, and the Council must maintain its focus on Somalia.

We support the analysis presented by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Michael Keating and wish to highlight five points.

First, we agree that this year's elections are critical. They need to be Somali-led and ensure that the Somali people are fully involved and feel ownership of the political process. We welcome the agreement reached at last week's Somali Leaders Forum in Mogadishu on the details of the electoral model. We also take note of President Mohamud's reminder that these elections will be the first in 47 years. That is a truly remarkable event and one that we all applaud.

Secondly, other political priorities require attention. Dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and regional administrations has been positive but needs to go further. Key issues still need to be addressed, including setting regional boundaries, completing the constitutional review and determining the governance of natural resources. The federal project relies on strengthening institutions in the regions. Federal and regional authorities need to make progress here to avoid jeopardizing the political transition. Somali civil society needs to have a bigger role. Furthermore, if peace is to be sustainable, stabilization will be critical in terms of effective service delivery for people in areas under Somali Government control. There is still a long way to go in these areas.

Thirdly, a well-functioning security sector is fundamental to long-term stability in Somali. The Federal Government needs to be supported to have the sufficient capacity to both prevent a resurgence of Al-Shabaab and other vectors of terrorism and to provide checks on regional and clan-based conflict. We welcome the efforts of international partners to strengthen the Somali National Army and the police force. However, there is an urgent need for closer coordination. The efforts will be successful only if partners programmes are made more coherent and if the silos are broken down. Building a strong and coherent army and police force will be essential to the implementation of a successful exit strategy for the international community.

Fourthly, 2016 will be a particularly important year for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The Al-Shabaab threat continues to be very real and AMISOM's role remains critical. The implementation of the commitments made by AMISOM's contributors at the Djibouti summit will be of fundamental importance, particularly with regard to commitments concerning command and control.

Lastly, I note that New Zealand is deeply concerned about the financing challenges facing AMISOM. Continued international support for the Mission will be essential if it is to fulfil its mandate. We acknowledge the important funding that the European Union continues to provide. With the reallocation of some of that funding, it will be important to work with partners in the region and further afield to ensure that AMISOM's current funding challenges are addressed in a manner that does not undermine its operations at this critical juncture.

This situation also underlines the need to move beyond our reliance on ad hoc financing for regionally led peace operations in Africa. New Zealand is a strong supporter of finding innovative solutions that can provide more predictable funding for such missions. That is something which we need to collectively

explore. We welcome efforts to mobilize funding from within Africa and hope that the international community, including the United Nations, can be strategic and creative in working out how to properly support the robust missions that the African Union is prepared to lead.

In conclusion, we know that achieving what we have outlined today will be difficult. We also know that, while the Federal Government has a central role to play, it cannot do this alone. The Council, the United Nations system, the African Union and other partners need to work closely with the Somali authorities in meeting these challenges. But we also remember today the great distance that Somalia has already travelled. We must all continue to support the Somali Government and people in their efforts to come together.

**Mr. Ibrahim** (Malaysia): I join colleagues around the table in expressing my appreciation to the Chinese presidency for convening this timely and important meeting. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keating and Ambassador Téte António for their insightful briefings on the latest developments in Somalia.

My delegation acknowledges and welcomes the presence of His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia, in the Chamber this morning. President Mohamud's presence today is a testament of his deep and abiding commitment to returning Somalia to normalcy and restoring hope for a better future for Somalia's people, who have suffered far too long from conflict and deprivation. We commend the steadily improving situation in Somalia since 2012 under President Mohamud's leadership. Let us hope that the Federal Government and the Federal State Governments in Somalia will stay the course for more significant progress on the political, social and economic fronts, particularly in the crucial weeks and months ahead.

The year 2016 is of particular significance for Somalia. After more than two decades of brutal conflict and the prolonged erosion of fundamental democratic norms and practices, the country will undertake a major and crucial step later this year in making greater progress towards re-establishing itself as a functioning State. To create the right enablers to drive that transformation, the Security Council and the international community must continue to remain actively engaged in Somalia, particularly in supporting the Federal and regional authorities in their efforts to restore peace and security, as well as in bringing much-needed socioeconomic development and progress to the people.

On the political front, Malaysia welcomes the strong regional support and engagement with Somalia, particularly by the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We commend ongoing efforts by the Federal Government of Somalia and the regional states in seeking consensus on the electoral model. The IGAD facilitation has led to recent announcement, on 3 April, by Puntland authorities to assent to the 4.5 model for the 2016 transition process. The successful outcome and conclusions, earlier this month, at the third National Leaders Forum, and the positive momentum created should be seized by stakeholders in the Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions to put aside their differences and work constructively with the Federal Government in order to establish a sustainable regional authority ahead of the scheduled electoral process.

Although elections based on one-person/one-vote will not be possible this year, the inclusive process leading to agreement on key principles of the electoral process should pave the way for more representative elections in 2020. In the same vein, the Federal Government and the regional authorities should be encouraged to expedite work in constituting the upper House of the legislature and to ensure that women's voices are adequately represented, particularly of the inclusionist candidates for the upcoming elections.

On the development front, Malaysia welcomes and supports the outcomes of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for Somalia, held in Istanbul in February, and commends the commitment of Federal Government to implement the outcomes. In addition, the recently concluded thirteenth Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held in Istanbul last week, also welcomed the transformation of the OIC Humanitarian Coordination Office in Somalia into a development office, reflecting the positive developments on the ground since 2011, when the OIC Office was first established.

While noting the significant progress Somalia has made in pursuing its development goals, the humanitarian situation in the country continues to be of concern. That includes chronic food insecurity, malnutrition, poor access to water, sanitation and

hygiene, displacement, as well as the cyclical violence attributed chiefly to armed violence, including by terrorist groups and through clan-based conflicts. Compounding that is the ongoing El Niño phenomenon. All those elements threaten to exacerbate the already precarious situation. All regional and international actors and donors should step in to provide assistance to the 5 million Somalis in dire need, which include approximately 300,000 children. Unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance must be secured from all stakeholders in the country.

On the security front, Malaysia joins other Council members in welcoming the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening Somalia's security sector and institutions, including the recently held African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop- and police-contributing country summit held in Djibouti and the African Union-United Nations Joint Task Force consultative meetings held in late February and late March, respectively. Malaysia fully supports the early roll-out and implementation of stabilizing efforts in areas newly liberated from Al-Shabaab, including through quick-impact projects. Such initiatives will help to promote local economies and form an important component of the overall efforts of the Federal Government to win the hearts and minds of local communities. In line with the commitments made at the AMISOM troop- and police-contributors summit, all the parties concerned should strengthen command and control for better coordination, particularly with a view to degrade and eradicate the threat posed by Al-Shabaab.

At a time when political tensions appear to be increasing, and against the backdrop of increasing intensity and frequency of complex attacks and operations by Al-Sabaab, particularly against civilians and civilian targets, the 20 per cent reduction of AMISOM troop allowances raises concerns. In that regard, we welcome the AU-United Nations Joint Task Force agreement to address the funding issue.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the tireless dedication and sacrifices made by all security sector actors in Somalia, particularly the brave men and women of the Somalia national security forces, AMISOM, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). In that regard, Malaysia affirms its support for AMISOM, UNSOM, UNSOS and the Federal Government's collective efforts to pave the way for Somalia to secure its place in the community of nations — a Somalia that is secure, stable and engaged in pursuit of national development for a better future.

**Mr. Lamek** (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Keating, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union, His Excellency Ambassador Tête António. I would particularly like to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who has honoured us with his presence today. I also thank him for the encouraging news that he shared with us.

The information provided by the President is important given the worrying news from Somalia over the past month. Al-Shabaab has been degraded, which is good, but the terrorist organization remains active. Combating Al-Shabaab is a fight against one of the many manifestations of terrorism, and everyone knows that fight is very close to our hearts in France. The fight against Al-Shabaab is a collective one. I would like to commend the courage and commitment of the personnel of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in combating that criminal organization. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the latest attacks. France, through the United Nations and the European Union, remains fully committed alongside the troop-contributing countries in those efforts. With a view to continuing to consolidate the progress made over recent years, we must do more in four areas.

First, AMISOM, which is in the front line of the fight against Al-Shabaab, in accordance with its mandate, must conduct offensive operations in the fight against that terrorist organizationThe situation on the gournd is complex and the enemy adapts its strategies as circumstances evolve. In that context, in order to mount an offensive, AMISOM must continue to improve its effectiveness and functioning, thereby bringing the maximum pressure to bear on the terrorist organization that is Al-Shabaab.

AMISOM contingents must act in a cohesive manner and with a single, clear chain of command, including shared planning and execution and with better information-sharing among the various contingents, which has not always been the case. Resolution 2124 (2013) already called for such qualitative improvements — an appeal reiterated in resolution 2234 (2015). The declaration by the troop-contributing

countries adopted at the Djibouti summit on 28 February takes up those varous points. AMISOM would greatly benefit from their swift implementation, beginning with the appointment of a Force Commander, while the United Nations should once again review the modalities for logistical support in order to provide better-adapted and more effective assistance. We therefore call on the African Union and the troop-contributing countries to work together to improve the work of the Mission, in line with its mandate.

I would add that an effective military fight against Al-Shabaab also requires exemplary conduct on the part of AMISOM troops in terms of respect for human rights law and international humanitarian law. A military intervention can be successful only if it is supported by the Somali people. The setting up of the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell should improve efforts in that connection, while also advancing the credibility and effectiveness of AMISOM. Similarly, the matter of impunity for some contingents is also problematic, as it undermines the reputation of the Mission and makes people on the ground less likely to embrace it.

But everyone knows that AMISOM all by itself is not a sustainable solution and that it is not intended to stay in Somalia forever. The development of a Somali security solution will allow us to consider, at the appropriate time, the drawdown of the Mission and an exit strategy for the force. That will require the gradual re-establishment of the authority of the Somali State over its territory by developing its capacity to ensure its own security, including that of its security forces.

The role of the Somali security forces is particularly necessary to support the efforts of AMISOM. It is also necessary to retain the areas liberated by AMISOM so that the African Union forces can focus on offensive actions. The Somali authorities must continually demonstrate their commitment to this undertaking, starting by paying their security forces. A number of bilateral and multilateral international partners are already active in this area, but their actions should undoubtedly be better coordinated. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, which has a key mandate in the coordination of international aid, must play this role better.

To conclude, I would say that only political action will permanently free the country from the crisis in which it has been entangled for for 25 years. This year is crucial as the election deadlines draw near. We are encouraged by the progress that has been made in framework of the National Consultative Forum and the choice of electoral modalities. Alongside the preparation of elections, in accordance with the deadlines, Somali political actors need to demonstrate their responsibility by completing the federalization of the country. The development of the Somali security solution that I mentioned earlier will depend largely on that eventuality, and it is our shared priority. We count on all Somali actors to rapidly finalize this project.

France understands the magnitude of the challenges Somalia is facing, as the level of our collective commitment demonstrates. Political mobilization must forthwith consolidate the military gains made in recent years. We hope that 2016 will be decisive in that respect.

**Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for organizing today's meeting on Somalia. I wish to welcome the President of Somalia, Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and thank him for honoring us with his presence and sharing his views on the situation in Somalia and his hope for the future of his country. I would also like to thank Mr. Michael Keating for his briefing and Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union, for his briefing on behalf of the High Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

The briefings provided enabled members of the Security Council to better understand the progress and challenges faced by the people and the Government of Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the United Nations and other international partners of Somalia, which have joined forces to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous Somalia. The progress we are all witnessing is a reward for the investment we are all making towards peace in a country that has long faced a very brutal war.

I take this opportunity to praise the Somalis for reaching agreement on the electoral process. The 4.5 formula as the electoral model will allow for the holding of elections in Somalia while taking into account the various sensibilities and influential role of the elders and traditional and religious leaders. We commend the national consultative process regarding the electoral process, which took into account the different points of view expressed by the various communities that compose the Somali ethnic mosaic. We also take note

of the commitment of the Somali stakeholders to the universal ballot in the elections to take place in 2020.

Significant progress has also been made in the constitutional review process and in the development of the federal system, while relevant legislation has recently been passed by Parliament regarding money-laundering, counter-terrorism financing and the protection and promotion of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children. The national gender policy, the national youth policy and the national development plan for 2017-2019 were important legislative milestones. We praise the Somali legislative body for these important achievements.

While we take note of the continuous progress in Somalia, the country still faces considerable challenges, especially regarding the humanitarian situation, which needs to be urgently addressed. Also, the fight against and defeat of Al-Shabaab aew imperative if the country is to make progress towards peace and stability. In this regard, predictable funding is an absolute necessity that we have to take into account for AMISOM.

We welcome the progress achieved in capacity-building for the Somali National Army and the Somali police force, and the financial commitment of international partners to developing programmes and projects for upgrading the Army and the police. This is also another important requirement, as the country needs to be organized to guarantee its own defence as peace continues to be built. It is important that the federal and regional authorities ensure the strict compliance of security operations with international standards regarding human rights and respect for the rule of law. The Federal Government of Somalia and the interim regional administrations need to create a secure environment for the civilian population, bridging any existing gaps and addressing intercommunal conflicts.

In conclusion, I wish to convey to the President of Somalia Angola's full support. We know that it is important that the country be reborn. The rebirth of the country needs to be an absolute objective that can be achieved. From the discussion this morning, the Security Council is again reassured of that. We therefore look forward to seeing a brighter future with peace, prosperity and sustainable development in the country.

**Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine): I would first of all like to warmly welcome the president of Somalia his Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. We also extend our appreciation to both briefers.

My delegation commends the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia and other parties involved in close cooperation with the Federal Government of Somalia. We welcome the progress achieved in the areas of State-building, good governance and restoring peace security and economic growth, which are crucially important in the light of upcoming parliamentary elections. We especially praise the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in ensuring security in the country and their significance for the further establishment of peace and reconciliation. The recent extension of the Mission's mandate underscored the importance of UNSOM activities in support of the work of the Federal Government of Somalia.

Ukraine strongly condemns the recent suicide bombings in the city of Gaalkacyo and the suicide car bombing at the Banadir regional administration headquarters in Mogadishu, which took the lives of 14 people, including two children. Recalling the Al-Shabaab attack in March on the coastal village of Garad, on the shores of Puntland, which included large numbers of children among the Al-Shabaab militants, we want to express our deep concern about the recruitment of children and their use in armed conflicts, along with other violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated against children in conflict situations.

It is very troubling that the recruitment of children and young people into Al-Shabaab is happening in mosques and schools. We believe firmly that every effort must be made to ensure that schools meet their goal of being educational facilities first and foremost, offering students a path to a better and more peaceful future. The sanctity of places of religious worship must also be respected, and they should not be used as poaching grounds for finding foot soldiers to fill in the ranks of terrorist groups. In our view, it is extremely important to improve the provisions for child protection in the mandates of the African Union Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in order to strengthen the Missions' abilities to effectively recognize, report and respond to violations and abuses committed against children, including their abduction by armed groups.

Ukraine acknowledges the positive impact of the collective steps taken by the United Nations and the Puntland authorities to make the necessary

arrangements for ensuring the proper treatment of former child soldiers recruited by terrorists, in order to rehabilitate and eventually reunite them with their families. Such children and young people should have an opportunity to complete their education and learn a trade so as to be able to make a living and contribute to their communities.

We commend the Federal Government of Somalia's drafting of a national security policy and plans for a consultative meeting in the regions aimed at advancing its implementation. The deliberations on a new policing model and updated Heegan plan for developing the Somalia police at the Federal, regional and state levels deserve special mention, as an essential element in the provision of improved safety and security to the local populations in every region in Somalia.

We also welcome the announcement, on 25 March, of a comprehensive agreement on peace and reconciliation among the peoples of Jubaland. We call on the Federal Government of Somalia to continue to cooperate with all the relevant stakeholders in order to resolve the longstanding disputes between various communities and administrations in the rest of Somalia. The agreement reached between the Federal Government and the Puntland Government with a letter agreeing to Puntland's full participation in the electoral process with the goal of forming a new Federal Parliament later this year represents another positive step on the way to achieving administrative unity in the country.

Considering that progress, the Security Council should stay focused on maintaining the current positive trends and securing the implementation of all of the Federal Government's initiatives aimed at establishing sustainable peace and completing the reconciliation process. The President of Somalia can rely on our continued support.

**Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal would like to thank the Chinese presidency for organizing today's briefing and to welcome the presence in the Chamber of Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. I would also like to thank our briefers this morning, Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, and Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union, for their clear presentations, which have given us a better understanding of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Somalia, as well as the challenges it is dealing with, particularly in the current pre-election period.

In that regard, I would also like to welcome the agreement concluded by Somali leaders, including President Mohamud, and the Presidents of the regional states of Puntland, Southwest, Galmudug and Jubaland, on the modalities for implementing the 2016 electoral process, at the Somali Leaders Forum held from 9 to 12 April. The communiqué announcing the agreement is a clear expression of the growing consensus among Somalia's leadership on the country's governance. The Forum also enabled them to arrive at agreement on the 2016 electoral process at the Federal and state levels regarding the parliamentary elections. In that regard, we offer them our encouragement and support for the success of the process, which should help to normalize the situation in Somalia.

However, in order to achieve that, Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) will need the support of their international partners more than ever. We therefore encourage the African Union Mission in Somalia to maintain its strong support to the country. However, we urge greater vigilance in ensuring that the violence around the election mentioned by the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group in its most recent report (see S/2015/801) does not spread to the rest of the country.

On the security front, we remain concerned about the persistent threat posed by Al-Shabaab to the liberated territories, which are also areas of intercommunal tension, as well as by the growing presence of the Islamic State in the region. Despite those continuing threats, Senegal welcomed the liberation of the town of Adan Yabaal, in Middle Shabelle region, after a major offensive against Al-Shabaab led by AMISOM and the Somali National Army. We encourage such joint operations, which will unquestionably enable people displaced by collateral damage — lack of water and electricity, vandalized equipment, burned food stocks, explosive devices planted by Al-Shabaab and so forth — to return home. The rapid provision of financing and technical support for the security sector by the international community will undoubtedly help to improve strategies for combating armed groups, including Al-Shabaab.

We firmly condemn all attacks on humanitarian personnel, the expropriation of aid and the creation of obstacles to its transportation, regardless of the

perpetrators. In that regard, Senegal would like to pay tribute to the staff of AMISOM, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight against Al-Shabaab. We would also like to salute the Somali national defence forces for their sacrifices, commitment and determination to defeat Al-Shabaab and achieve lasting peace in Somalia.

Somalia's mining resources continue to be the object of growing interest from international corporations, and that too has the potential to be a threat to the country's peace, security and stability. In that regard, we condemn the continuing violations of the ban on exports of charcoal from Somalia despite a slight improvement in the situation in the wake of Al-Shabaab's withdrawal from the production sites. We reiterate our call for a coordinated effort among the Federal Government, the Federal states and the international organizations and military forces on the ground to establish a thorough and effective mechanism for combating the illegal trade in Somali charcoal. In that context, we commend the efforts of maritime forces to fight illicit trafficking in natural resources.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Senegal's support and encouragement to the people and the Government of Somalia as they look forward to the elections scheduled for this year.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I welcome the President of Somalia, His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, to this meeting and thank him for his statement. I also thank Mr. Keating, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, and Ambassador António, the Permanent Observer of the African to the United Nations, for their briefings.

With elections scheduled for later this year, Somalia's peace process is entering a crucial period. Recently, the Federal Government of Somalia has made active efforts to promote social reconciliation, combat terrorism, advance federal institution-building and comprehensively implement Vision 2016. China highly appreciates the able leadership of President Mohamud and is confident that, under his leadership, the Somali people will continue to achieve new progress on national reconciliation. At the same time, the security and humanitarian situation in the country remains fragile and the attainment of peace and development is still an arduous task. In that connection, I wish to emphasize the following four points.

First, all parties should continue to push forward the peace process in Somalia. China welcomes the fact that President Mohamud and the leaders of all parties in Somalia held a National Leaders Forum recently and reached a consensus on the electoral process for the 2016 elections. We hope that all the parties will put the long-term interests of their nation and their people above all else, strengthen dialogue, settle their differences and work together for peace, stability and development in their country. The international community should adhere to the principle of Somali ownership and Somali leadership, effectively help the Federal Government advance the peace process, reinforce federation-building, comprehensively improve its administrative capacity, expedite local institution-building, promote social reconciliation and bring about lasting peace and the sustainable development of Somalia.

Secondly, emphasis should be placed on consolidating the security environment in Somalia. The terrorist group Al-Shabaab still poses a grave threat to security in the country. Recently, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army have worked together to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation and have achieved remarkable results. China strongly condemns the terrorist attacks against AMISOM and appreciates the important contributions made by the African Union and countries in the region to the maintenance of security and stability in Somalia. We welcome the summit of the AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries in February, and expect the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and other parties concerned to work together and continue to provide sustained and stable logistical support to AMISOM and the Somali National Army, thereby creating external conditions favourable to the advancement of the Somali political process.

Thirdly, efforts are needed to comprehensively promote the development of the Somali economy. Development is the only way to eliminate the root causes of conflicts and achieve lasting stability in Somalia. Somalia is endowed with rich natural resources and has enormous potential for development. The international community should increase its assistance to Somalia aimed at building infrastructure and developing its agriculture, boosting job creation and improving development so that the Somali people can enjoy the

dividends of peace at an early date. China expects the World Bank and other international financial institutions and development agencies to honour their commitments of assistance as soon as possible and to provide effective support for Somalia's economic development and the improvement of its people's lives by focusing on strengthening the country's ability to sustain itself, based on its development needs, in order to lay a solid foundation for its future development.

Fourthly, the international community should further improve its coordination with regard to the Somali question and create synergy. China supports a leading role played by the United Nations in coordinating the international efforts aimed at assisting Somalia. We also support the constructive help provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in promoting the political process and starting national reconstruction in Somalia. China welcomes the meeting held in February by the High-Level Partnership Forum on Somalia, which further consolidated the consensus of the international community for Somalia's development. It is hoped that, in providing assistance to Somalia, the international community will continue to increase its consultation and cooperation with the Federal Government of Somalia, fully respect its views and focus on the priority areas and overall direction of the country's development with a view to forging synergy among assistance efforts.

China and Africa form a community of shared destiny and interests. At the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation last December, China's President Xi Jinping proposed 10 areas in which China wants to engage in pragmatic cooperation with Africa: industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure, financial resources, green development, trade and investment facilitation, poverty reduction and public welfare, public health, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security. China is ready to join hands with African countries, including Somalia, in a concerted and active effort to follow up on the Summit's outcomes and, in the light of Africa's actual needs, help the continent to improve people's livelihoods and enhance African countries' own development capacities.

For many years, China has firmly supported the Somali peace process and provided Somalia and AMISOM with assistance to the best of its ability. China has also trained a large number of talented people for the country's reconstruction under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. We are ready to work with the international community in our ongoing and unremitting efforts for peace, stability, prosperity and development in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*